

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SNM-02 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

INFO AMEMBASSY RANGOON

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 252862

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, TH

SUBJECT: HIGH LEVEL THAI POLICE VIEWS OF US-RTG
NARCOTICS COOPERATION

1. SUMMARY: ON OCTOBER 15 POLICE GENERALS CHUMPHOL
LOHACHALA AND POW SARASIN MET WITH DEPARTMENT AND DEA
OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS US-THAI NARCOTICS COOPERATION.
IN SOME RESPECTS THE THAIS SEEMED PLEASED WITH THE
COOPERATION. BUT DURING FRANK DISCUSSIONS THE THAIS
EXPRESSED DISSATISFACTION OVER WHAT THEY VIEWED AS A
LACK OF US CONCERN FOR THEIR OWN DOMESTIC DRUG PROB-
LEM AS WELL AS AN ABSENCE OF TRUST IN OUR DEALINGS
WITH THE THAI POLICE. WHILE MOST OF THE ARGUMENTS
PUT FORTH BY THE TWO GENERALS COULD EASILY BE REFUTED,
WE ARE PASSING THEM ON AS INDICATIONS OF A CERTAIN
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DEGREE OF THAI BRUISED FEELINGS, AS WELL AS POSSIBLE

SORE POINTS IN OUR CURRENT WORKING RELATIONSHIPS. END SUMMARY.

2. CHUMPHOL AND POW POINTED FREQUENTLY TO WHAT THEY VIEWED AS A LACK OF US INTEREST AND COOPERATION IN HELPING WITH THEIR COUNTRY'S DOMESTIC DRUG PROBLEM. THEY STATED THAT THAILAND'S 300,000 DRUG ADDICTS WERE A DIRECT RESULT OF RTG COOPERATION WITH US IN CHOKING

OFF THE OUTWARD FLOW OF NARCOTICS INTO THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET PLACE, A COOPERATION WHICH IN TURN LED THAI TRAFFICKERS TO CONCENTRATE ON THE DOMESTIC MARKET. IN SPITE OF THE ABOVE, ACCORDING TO THE GENERALS, WE HAVE SHOWN NO INTEREST IN REDUCING THAILAND'S ADDICT POPULATION OR ASSISTING IN THE SUPPRESSION OF LOCAL TRAFFICKERS. INSTEAD, THE US ASSISTANCE EFFORT HAS BEEN DIRECTED ENTIRELY AGAINST THE BIG INTERNATIONAL TRAFFICKERS.

3. THE TWO GENERALS GAVE SOME EXAMPLES OF WHAT THEY SAID DEMONSTRATED OUR ALLEGED LACK OF COOPERATION. THEY SEEMED PARTICULARLY UPSET OVER THEIR UNDERSTANDING FROM DEA BANGKOK THAT USG FUNDING FOR THAT CITY'S METROPOLITAN NARCOTICS UNIT (MNU) WAS TO BE ENDED. ACCORDING TO THE THAIS, THIS ACTION WAS BEING TAKEN BECAUSE THE MNU WAS NOT EFFECTIVE IN SUPPRESSING THE INTERNATIONAL TRAFFICKERS. THEY ALLEGED THAT THE MNU WAS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL AGAINST THAI DOMESTIC NARCOTICS AND THAT IT SHOULD BE RETAINED TO DEMONSTRATE OUR CONCERN FOR THAILAND'S PROBLEMS. AS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF INSUFFICIENT COOPERATION, THE TWO POLICE OFFICERS CLAIMED THAT DEA IN BANGKOK SHOULD KEEP THE THAI POLICE APPRISED OF NARCOTICS RELATED DEVELOPMENTS IN OTHER COUNTRIES. DEA SUGGESTED THAT PERIODIC BRIEFINGS OF THAI OFFICIALS ON WORLD-WIDE TRAFFICKING PATTERNS AND DEVELOPMENTS SHOULD BE INSTITUTED IN BANGKOK.

4. DEPARTMENT AND DEA OFFICERS POINTED OUT THAT CONGRESSIONAL AUTHORIZATION FOR DEA ACTIVITIES OVERSEAS WAS SPECIFICALLY FOR INTERNATIONAL, NOT DOMESTIC, CONFIDENTIAL

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CONTROL OF TRAFFICKING. THE DEA OFFICIALS POINTED OUT THAT MNU WAS NOT COST EFFECTIVE FOR THIS PURPOSE AND THAT BUDGET CONSTRAINTS MEANT THAT MNU FUNDS SHOULD BE USED MORE EFFECTIVELY ELSEWHERE. THEY ALSO MENTIONED MNU'S POOR PERFORMANCE IN THE ENFORCEMENT FIELD. DEA OFFICERS ALSO REFUTED CHARGES THAT THEIR OFFICE IN BANGKOK WAS NOT BEING FULLY COOPERATIVE IN EXCHANGES OF INFORMATION. IN PRIVATE, STATE DEPART-

MENT OFFICERS TOOK EXCEPTION TO THE ALLEGATIONS THAT THE USG DID NOT TAKE AN INTEREST IN THAILAND'S DOMESTIC PROBLEMS. WE REMINDED THE THAIS THAT 75 OF UNFDAC FUNDS FOR THAILAND WERE FROM THE USG, AND THAT IT WAS OUR MONEY SUPPORTING THE COLOMBO PLAN'S REGIONAL NARCOTICS ADVISOR IN BANGKOK. ADDITIONALLY, WE POINTED TO OUR CONTINUED EFFORTS AT CUSTOMS DEVELOPMENTS AS WELL AS WITH CROP SUBSTITUTION/RESEARCH AND ZONAL DEVELOPMENT RELATED ACTIVITIES WHICH COMPLEMENTED THE KING'S HILL TRIBE PROJECT. ONE OF THE POLICE

PRIVATELY ADMITTED THAT THESE PROGRAMS DID INDICATE OUR CONCERN FOR THAILAND'S PROBLEMS, BUT HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT SUCH PROGRAMS WERE NOT VISIBLE ENOUGH AND DIFFICULT TO IDENTIFY WITH THE USG AS AN INDIVIDUAL DONOR.

5. PREDICTABLY, CHUMPHOL AND POW ALSO USED THE OCCASION TO COMPLAIN OF THE DELAY IN DELIVERING THE FIVE HELICOPTERS WHICH THEY HAD BEEN PROMISED. REVEALING THAT THEY BELIEVE THESE FIVE AIRCRAFT WENT TO BURMA AND THAT THE SUPPLY PIPELINE HAD SIMPLY NOT YET PRODUCED REPLACEMENTS FOR THAILAND, THE GENERALS SAID THAT THEY UNDERSTOOD BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS AND CHANGING PRIORITIES. HOWEVER, THEY WENT ON TO SAY THAT THEIR PRIMARY CONCERN ON THIS MATTER WAS THAT WE DID NOT CONSULT WITH THE RTG BEFORE TAKING DECISIONS REGARDING THE HELICOPTERS. THIS LACK OF CONSULTATION WAS GIVEN AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE US NOT TRUSTING THE THAIS.

6. SINCE WE WERE NOT ANXIOUS TO GET INVOLVED TOO DEEPLY ON THE SUBJECT OF HELICOPTERS, WE CHOSE TO LET THE THAI COMMENTS PASS. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN AN EASY TASK TO DEMONSTRATE SOUND REASONS BEHIND OUR DECISIONS ON CONFIDENTIAL

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THIS MATTER.

7. WHEN ASKED ABOUT REGIONAL COOPERATION, THE THAIS SAID THEY WERE GENERALLY SATISFIED, ESPECIALLY WITH THE WORK OF COLOMBO PLAN NARCOTICS ADVISOR PIO ABERRO. THEY SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED CONTINUED USG SUPPORT FOR ABERRO IN THAT POSITION. IN CONTRAST THEY WERE DISPLEASED WITH THE UN REGIONAL NARCOTICS WORK IN GENERAL, AND WITH THE "POLITICAL" APPOINTMENT OF A.H.H. PERERA TO THE UNFDAC REGIONAL NARCOTICS ADVISOR JOB. ACCORDING TO POW, WHO MUST WORK WITH PERERA, THE NEW UNFDAC ADVISOR HAS HAD NO EXPERIENCE IN NARCOTICS WORK. IN CONTRAST, ABERRO WAS DESCRIBED AS ENFORCEMENT ORIENTED AND THOROUGHLY FAMILIAR WITH NARCOTICS AS WELL AS ASEAN POLICE FORCES. THE GENERALS DID

SUGGEST THAT REGIONAL OPERATIONAL LEVEL POLICE CONFERENCES WOULD BE BENEFICIAL. THEY WERE OBVIOUSLY SEEKING THE ASSISTANCE OF STATE AND DEA IN ORGANIZING AND FUNDING SUCH MEETINGS. WE AGREED THAT THIS SHOULD BE LOOKED INTO.

8. ON THE SUBJECT OF US AND UNFDAC CROP SUBSTITUTION/RESEARCH PROGRAMS (SEE PARA 4), THE THAI POLICE EXPRESSED THEIR APPROVAL AND REQUESTED THAT THE PROJECTS BE EXTENDED.

9. COMMENT: MOST OF THE THAI COMPLAINTS APPEARED DEFENSIVE IN NATURE AND MORE FOR PUBLIC CONSUMPTION THAN ANYTHING ELSE. HOWEVER, THERE WERE SOLID INDICATIONS OF BRUISED THAI FEELINGS, PERHAPS MORE OVER THE HELICOPTER AND MNU ISSUES THAN ANYTHING ELSE.
END COMMENT. INGERSOLL

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